

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
WILLIAM A. HINTON STATE LABORATORY INSTITUTE
VIRUS ISOLATION LABORATORY
305 SOUTH STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN, MA 02130

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPECIMEN COLLECTION FOR RESPIRATORY VIRUS TESTING
(Influenza- seasonal or novel, Parainfluenza, Adenovirus, RSV)

Specimen Types:

Specimens should only be collected on patients who meet the following criteria: Acute onset of influenza-like illness within the previous 48 hours with symptoms of fever $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ (37.8°C), and a cough or sore throat. Fever does not have to be present at the time of specimen collection.

1. Influenza (seasonal), parainfluenza, or adenovirus: submit **nasopharyngeal (NP) swab (preferred)** or throat swab.
2. Respiratory Syncytial Virus: submit **only NP swab**.
3. Suspect avian or novel influenza: contact the MDPH Immunization Program at (617) 983-6800 prior to specimen submission. Submit **throat swab (preferred) and/or lower respiratory tract specimens**.

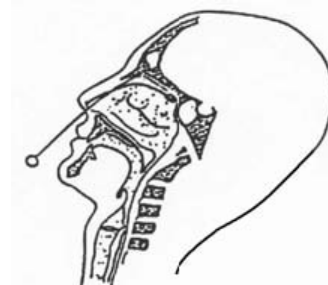
Container for Specimen:

Storage of Virus Isolation Kit: The virus (VTM) transport medium should **arrive frozen** and be **stored frozen** until ready for use. Thawed medium should be **refrigerated** immediately and **used within two weeks** and **never re-frozen**. Note: If medium is stored thawed, freeze the outer mailing fiberboard cylinder containing the ice pack and aluminum container. **To order Respiratory Virus Specimen Kits, call (617) 983-6800.**

Specimen Collection Instructions:

Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab Collection:

1. Assemble all supplies including the virus isolation kit, gloves, pen, scissors, etc.
2. If the VTM is frozen, allow it to thaw completely – usually takes 2-3 minutes when held in your hands.
3. Tilt the patient's head back slightly. Bend the flexible wire of the sterile NP swab in a small arc and gently insert the swab along the medial part of the septum, until it reaches the posterior nares.
4. Rotate the swab slightly several times to dislodge the columnar epithelial cells and then quickly remove the swab.
5. Insert the NP swab into the cold VTM, cutting the excess wire to fit inside the tube. Firmly secure the cap.



Throat Swab (TS) Collection:

1. Assemble all supplies, such as the virus isolation kit, gloves, pen, etc.
2. If the VTM is frozen, allow it to thaw completely – usually takes a 2-3 minutes when held in your hands.
3. Using the sterile, polyester-tipped swab with a plastic shaft, vigorously swab only the posterior pharyngeal wall. **Do not use a cotton, wooden shaft swab as a replacement.**
4. Insert the swab into the cold VTM, and break off the shaft so that it does not protrude above the rim of the container. Firmly secure the cap.

Place the VTM tube in the inner aluminum container (provided) and cap. Seal the Specimen Submission Form in a plastic bag and place along with the inner aluminum container(s) in the outer fiberboard cylinder or box (provided) containing the frozen ice pack. Place the specimen in the refrigerator until shipped.

Labeling of Primary Specimen Container:

Clearly label the VTM specimen tube with patient's name date of birth, collection date and sample type (e.g. NP or TS).

Requisition to Use: SLI Specimen Submission Form, SS-SLI-1-08. Complete **all applicable information** on the Specimen Submission Form in sections 1-8. In section 5, write the test requested as: "respiratory panel" for parainfluenza, RSV, adenovirus and seasonal influenza or, "suspect avian or novel influenza". For suspect avian or novel influenza, contact the MDPH Immunization Program at (617) 983-6800 prior to specimen submission. **Testing delays can occur** if information is missing or specimens are received without a submission form.

Storage Condition of Specimen Once Collected: Refrigerate, **do not refreeze**, until transported for testing.

Shipping Instructions: Ship specimens without delay on frozen ice packs. **Specimens received 72 hrs after collection are unsuitable for testing.** Specimens collected **Mon-Tues** may be shipped to the SLI via U.S. Mail if sent out by Tuesday afternoon. Specimens collected **Wed-Fri or weekends**, contact an Immunization Epidemiologist at (617) 983-6800 for specimen courier pickup. If testing for RSV, use a same day courier to optimize isolation of the virus.

Ship to: Virus Isolation Laboratory
William A. Hinton State Laboratory Institute
305 South Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Special Notes: Test reports will be sent to the submitting health care provider once testing is completed.

Questions: Contact Massachusetts Immunization Program at (617) 983-6800.